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# New Senate bill seeks to tackle the flow of fentanyl into the U.S. from China and Mexico

By **DIDI TANG**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — In a rare bipartisan move, two senators have introduced legislation in the latest attempt to fight the flow of fentanyl and its precursors into the United States from China, Mexico and through other borders — one reason that President Donald Trump has given for his new tariffs.

In imposing taxes, or tariffs, on imports from Mexico, Canada and China, Trump says those countries have failed to stem the trafficking of fentanyl into the U.S., among other issues. The governments in those nations all say they have cooperated on the matter, and Trump said Thursday that he had postponed tariffs for a month on most goods from Mexico following a talk with the country's president.

The bill does not link tariffs to fentanyl smuggling but seeks expanded authority to sanction state-owned or state-controlled Chinese entities, including banks, involved in financing foreign opioid trafficking. The measure also would have the U.S. government track more chemicals that can



France's President Emmanuel Macron, center, is welcomed to the U.S. Capitol by, from left, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., Sen. James Risch, R-Idaho, and Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., in Washington, Monday, Feb. 24, 2025.

**Associated Press**

be used to make methamphetamine.

The legislation was introduced Thursday by Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho, who is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and New Hampshire Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, the committee's top Democrat.

Risch called China "the single greatest source of fentanyl and synthetic opi-

oid precursors to Mexican cartels" and he accused the Chinese government of supporting the activity.

"These opioids then come across our southern border and kill over 100,000 Americans every year. This needs to end and the perpetrators need to be held accountable," Risch said.

Shaheen said the U.S. should "use every tool at our disposal to cut off the

flow of fentanyl."

She said that China is "the primary supplier of fentanyl precursors fueling this epidemic, and it has not done enough to curb the export of these chemicals to Mexican transnational criminal groups who seek to traffic fentanyl into the U.S."

Liu Pengyu, spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, accused the U.S. of spreading "all kinds

of lies" on the fentanyl issue.

"We are willing to carry out pragmatic cooperation with the United States on the basis of equality and mutual respect, but we firmly oppose the United States using the fentanyl issue as an excuse to put pressure, threaten and blackmail China," Liu said. Last year, a report by a special House committee focused on countering the Chinese government said Beijing was fueling the fentanyl crisis in the U.S. by subsidizing the manufacturing of materials used by traffickers to make the drug outside the country.

The Chinese government says it has taken many steps, including "striking hard against fentanyl-related crimes," "enforcing strict control over precursors of fentanyl-related substances" and "promoting global governance of fentanyl-related substances." In June, the Chinese Ministry of Public Security said police arrested a suspect identified by U.S. law enforcement in a case involving a complicated web of money laundering and drug trafficking in China, Mexico and the U.S.. □

# FBI committed to bringing home American hostages held in foreign countries, director says

By **ERIC TUCKER**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The FBI will work to "zero out" the population of Americans detained or held hostage in foreign countries, Director Kash Patel said Thursday at a State Department ceremony honoring the hostage community and their families.

"My singular promise to you in this community is that I will do everything as the director of the FBI to marshal the resources necessary to make sure that no other American family feels that pain," he said during the flag-raising event.

Patel spoke as the Trump administration is working

to bring home Americans from multiple countries, including Russia and Venezuela. The government is also

trying to secure the release of remaining American hostages held by Hamas, with Adam Boehler, Presi-



FBI Director Kash Patel speaks during a ceremony to raise the Hostage and Wrongful Detainee flag at the State Department, Thursday, March 6, 2025, in Washington.

**Associated Press**

dent Donald Trump's nominee to be special envoy for hostage affairs, leading direct talks with the militant group. "We still don't have everybody back," Patel said. "Whatever lawful authorities we have at the FBI, we are going to give 24/7, 365 days to make sure that we zero out this number and to make sure we prevent others from going into situations that you are now all too familiar with."

The FBI houses a multiagency fusion cell that handles hostage cases involving Americans in foreign countries. The State Department, meanwhile, relies on a special presidential envoy the position for which Boehler

has been tapped to negotiate the release of Americans who are wrongfully detained.

"When the president asked me if there was any job that I thought that I wanted to focus on," Boehler said Thursday, "I told him that this was the only one I would look at because I think there's nothing more important for this country than for everyone to know that if they're abroad and they're taken, that the country has their back."

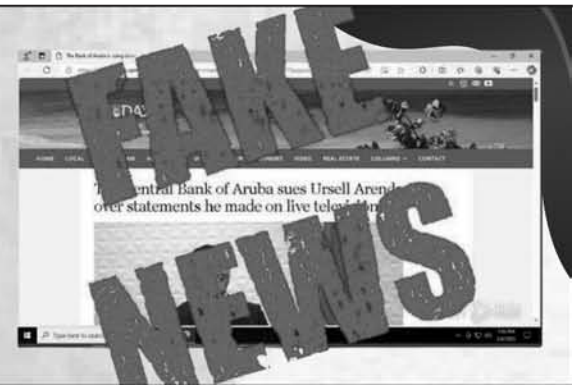
The Trump administration last month returned home Marc Fogel, an American schoolteacher jailed in Russia on drug charges, as part of a prisoner swap. □



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## Trump changes course and delays some tariffs on Mexico and Canada

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER  
and JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Donald Trump on Thursday postponed 25% tariffs on many imports from Mexico and some imports from Canada for a month amid widespread fears of the economic fallout from a broader trade war.

The White House insists its tariffs are about stopping the smuggling of fentanyl, but the taxes proposed by Trump have caused a gaping wound in the decades-old North American trade partnership, and Canada has felt compelled to quickly take aggressive countermeasures. Trump's tariff plans have also caused the stock market to sink and alarmed U.S. consumers.

In addition to his claims about fentanyl, Trump has insisted that the tariffs could be resolved by fixing the trade deficit and he emphasized while speaking in the Oval Office that he still plans to impose "reciprocal" tariffs starting on April 2.

"Most of the tariffs go on April the second," Trump said before signing the orders. "And then we have some temporary ones and small ones, relatively small, although it's a lot of money having to do with Mexico and Canada."

Trump said he was not looking to extend the exemption on the 25% tariff for autos for another month.

Imports from Mexico that comply with the 2020 USMCA trade pact would be excluded from the 25% tariffs for a month, according to the orders signed by Trump. Imports from Canada that comply with the trade deal would also



Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick speaks with reporters after President Donald Trump addressed a joint session of Congress at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

Associated Press

avoid the 25% tariffs for a month, while the potash that U.S. farmers import from Canada would be tariffed at 10%, the same rate at which Trump wants to tariff Canadian energy products.

Roughly 62% of imports from Canada would likely still face the new tariffs because they're not USMCA compliant, according to a White House official who insisted on anonymity to preview the orders on a call with reporters. Half of imports from Mexico that are not USMCA compliant would also be taxed under the orders being signed by Trump, the official said.

Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum has planned to announce any retaliatory measures on Sunday, but Trump credited her with making progress on illegal immigration and drug smuggling as a reason for again pausing tariffs that were initially supposed to

go into full effect in February.

"I did this as an accommodation, and out of respect for, President Sheinbaum," Trump said on Truth Social. "Our relationship has been a very good one, and we are working hard, together, on the Border."

Trump's on-again, off-again tariffs threats have roiled financial markets, lowered consumer confidence, and enveloped many businesses in an uncertain atmosphere that could delay hiring and investment.

Major U.S. stock markets briefly bounced off lows after Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick previewed the month-long pauses on CNBC on Thursday. Significant declines already seen this week resumed within an hour.

The S&P 500 stock index has fallen below where it was before Trump was elected.

Sheinbaum said she and

Trump "had an excellent and respectful call in which we agreed that our work and collaboration have yielded unprecedented results," on a post on the social media platform X, formerly Twitter.

Mexico has cracked down on cartels, sent troops to the U.S. border and delivered 29 top cartel bosses long chased by American authorities to the Trump administration in a span of weeks.

At a press conference, Sheinbaum elaborated on her call with Trump Thursday, saying that she told the president that Mexico was making great strides in fulfilling his security demands.

"I told him we're getting results," Sheinbaum said. But the U.S. imposed the tariffs, so she asked Trump "how are we going to continue cooperating, collaborating with something that hurts the people of Mexico?"

She added that "practically all of the trade" between the U.S. and Mexico will be exempt from tariffs until April 2.

She said the two countries will continue to work together on migration and security, and to cut back on fentanyl trafficking to the U.S.

From January to February, the amount of fentanyl seized at the border dropped more than 41%, according to Sheinbaum, citing data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection. She cited the dip as meeting a commitment made to Trump.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, the leader of Canada's most populous province, said that starting Monday the province will charge 25% more for electricity shipped to 1.5 million Americans in response to Trump's tariff plan. Ontario provides electricity to Minnesota, New York and Michigan.

"This whole thing with President Trump is a mess," Ford said Thursday.

"This reprieve, we've went down this road before. He still threatens the tariffs on April 2."

Ford's office said that the tariff would remain in place even if there's a one month reprieve from the Americans.

Ford has said that so long as the threat of tariffs continue, Ontario's position will not change.

Lutnick said that he will be watching fentanyl overdose deaths in the U.S. as a key "metric" he will focus on when evaluating Canada and Mexico's efforts to combat the synthetic opioid. □



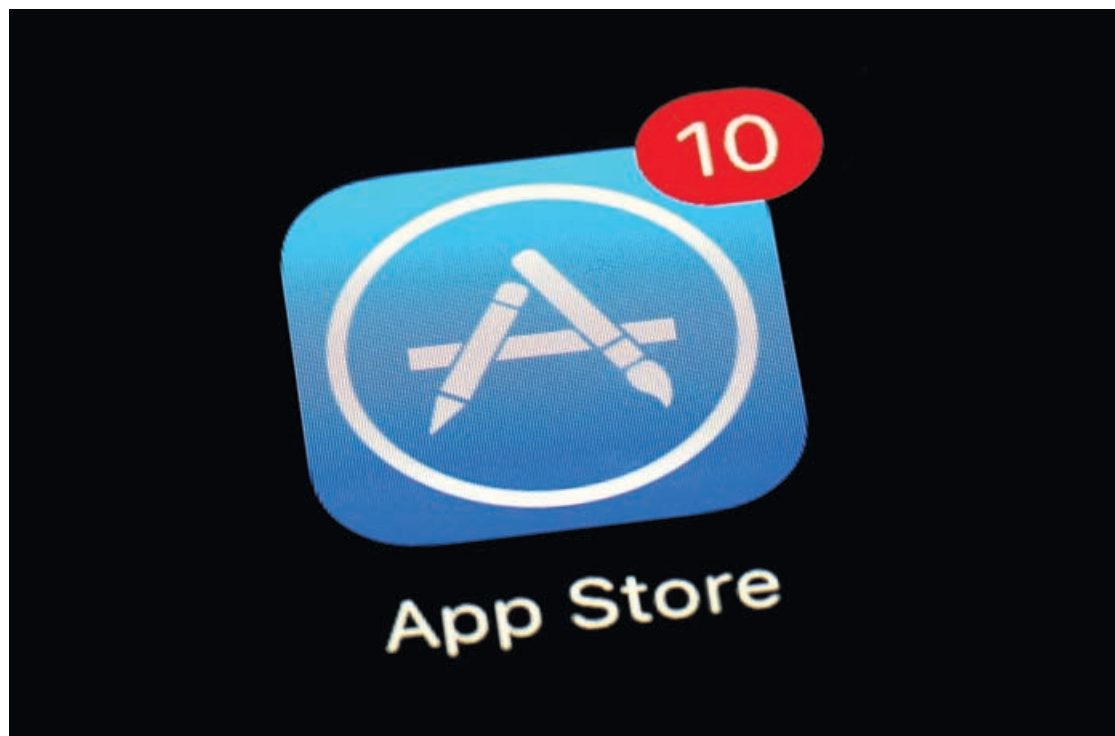
# Utah becomes the first state to pass legislation requiring app stores to verify ages

By **HANNAH SCHOENBAUM**  
Associated Press

**SALT LAKE CITY (AP)** — Utah on Wednesday became the first state to pass legislation requiring app stores to verify users' ages and get parental consent for minors to download apps to their devices.

The bill headed to the desk of Gov. Spencer Cox has pitted Meta, which operates Facebook and Instagram, against app store giants Apple and Google over who should be responsible for verifying ages. Similar bills have been introduced in at least 12 other states in the latest fight over children's online safety. The proposals targeting app stores follow legal fights over laws requiring social media platforms to verify the ages of users.

Meta and other social media companies support putting the onus on app stores to verify ages amid criticism that they don't do enough to make their products safe for children — or verify that no kids under 13 use them. "Parents want a one-stop shop to verify their child's age and grant permission for them to download apps in a privacy-preserving



Apple's App Store icon is displayed on an iPad in Baltimore, March 19, 2018.

Associated Press

way. The app store is the best place for it," Meta, X and Snap Inc. said in a joint statement Wednesday. "We applaud Utah for putting parents in charge with its landmark legislation and urge Congress to follow suit."

The app stores say app developers are better equipped to handle age verification and other safety measures. Requiring app stores to confirm ages will

make it so all users have to hand over sensitive identifying information, such as a driver's license, passport, credit card or Social Security number, even if they don't want to use an age-restricted app, Apple said. "Because many kids in the U.S. don't have government-issued IDs, parents in the U.S. will have to provide even more sensitive documentation just to allow their child to access apps meant

for children. That's not in the interest of user safety or privacy," the company said in its most recent online safety report.

Apple considers age a matter of privacy and lets users to decide whether to disclose it.

The company gives parents the option to set age-appropriate parameters for app downloads. The Google Play Store does the same.

Apple and Google are among a litany of tech companies that help support the Chamber of Progress, a tech policy group that lobbied Utah lawmakers to reject the bill. Last year, Apple helped kill a similar bill in Louisiana that would have required app stores to help enforce age restrictions.

Kouri Marshall, a spokesperson for the Chamber of Progress, called the measure "a tremendous encroachment of individual privacy" that he said places a heavy burden on app stores to ensure online safety.

Republican Sen. Todd Weiler, the bill's sponsor, argued it's "a lot easier to target two app stores than it is to target 10,000 (app) developers."

Under the bill, app stores would be required to request age information when someone creates an account. If a minor tries to open one, the bill directs the app store to link it to their parent's account and may request a form of ID to confirm their identity. Weiler said a credit card could be used as an age verification tool in most cases. □

## Judge pauses GOP states' lawsuit to limit people in the U.S. illegally from census count

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**  
Associated Press

A federal judge agreed Thursday with Trump administration lawyers to put

on hold a lawsuit filed by four Republican state attorneys general that is attempting to exclude people in the U.S. illegally

from numbers used to divvy up congressional seats among states after the once-a-decade census. Lawyers for the Republican administration said new leaders were in the process of filling roles at the U.S. Department of Commerce, which oversees the U.S. Census Bureau, and that they have not had time to determine how they want to proceed with the litigation.

The GOP state attorneys from Kansas, Louisiana, Ohio and West Virginia filed the lawsuit against the Commerce Department in the waning days of the Biden administration

in January. Since then, the Biden-appointed Census Bureau director has resigned and Trump-nominated Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick was confirmed by the U.S. Senate, replacing Gina Raimondo, a Democrat.

The 14th Amendment states "the whole number of persons in each state" should be counted for the numbers used for apportionment, the process of allocating congressional seats and Electoral College votes among the states, based on population.

Voters in California and Texas affiliated with a

Democratic group had been trying to intervene in the case, claiming the state attorneys general's lawsuit would harm them by taking away congressional representation and Electoral College votes from their states. The judge struck down their motion and said it would have to be refiled once the hold is lifted. A Republican redistricting expert had written that using citizen voting-age population instead of the total population for the purpose of redrawing congressional and legislative districts could be advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites. □



A briefcase of a census taker is seen as she knocks on the door of a residence, Aug. 11, 2020, in Winter Park, Fla.

Associated Press



# Women's rights are under attack 30 years after leaders adopted a blueprint for equality, U.N. says

By **EDITH M. LEDERER**

**Associated Press**

**UNITED NATIONS (AP)** —

Thirty years after world leaders adopted a historic blueprint to achieve gender equality, a new United Nations report says women's and girls' rights are under attack and gender discrimination remains deeply embedded in economies and societies.

The report released Thursday by the U.N. agency focused on women's rights and gender equality found that nearly one-quarter of governments worldwide reported a backlash to women's rights last year.

Despite some progress, including on girls' education and access to family planning, UN Women said a woman or girl is killed every 10 minutes by a partner or family member and that cases of conflict-related sexual violence have increased by 50% since 2022. The report, released ahead of International Women's Day on Saturday, also noted that only 87 countries have ever been led by a woman.

"Globally, women's human rights are under attack," U.N. Secretary-Gen-



Flags fly outside the United Nations headquarters Sept. 28, 2019.

eral Antonio Guterres said in a statement. "Instead of mainstreaming equal rights, we're seeing the mainstreaming of misogyny."

He said the world must stand firm "in making human rights, equality and empowerment a reality for all women and girls, for everyone, everywhere."

The 189 countries that attended a 1995 Beijing wom-

en's conference adopted a landmark declaration and 150-page platform for action to achieve gender equality, calling for bold action in 12 areas, including combating poverty and gender-based violence and putting women at top levels in business, government and at peacemaking tables. It also said for the first time in a U.N. document that human rights in-

clude the right of women to control and decide "on matters relating to their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health, free of discrimination, coercion and violence." In the new review, which includes contributions from 159 countries, UN Women said countries have taken many steps forward on gender equality and women's rights in the past five

years but that such rights still are facing growing threats worldwide.

On the positive side, the report said some 88% of countries have passed laws to combat violence against women and established services to help victims in the past five years. Most countries have banned workplace discrimination, and 44% are improving the quality of education and training for girls and women, it said.

Yet gender discrimination is deeply embedded, with wide gaps in power and resources that restrain women's rights, the report said.

"The weakening of democratic institutions has gone hand in hand with backlash on gender equality," UN Women said.

It warned that "anti-rights actors are actively undermining longstanding consensus on key women's rights issues" and seeking to block or slow legal and policy gains they can't roll back.

UN Women said almost 25% of countries reported that backlash on gender equality is hampering implementation of the Beijing platform. □

**Associated Press**

## South Korean fighter jets accidentally drop bombs, injuring 8 people

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM**

**Associated Press**

**SEOUL, South Korea (AP)** —

Two South Korean fighter jets accidentally dropped eight bombs on a civilian area during a joint live-fire exercise with the U.S. military on Thursday, injuring eight people, officials said. The MK-82 bombs released by the KF-16 fighter jets fell outside a firing range, the air force said in a statement. It apologized and expressed hopes for a speedy recovery of the injured and said it would offer compensation and take other necessary steps. The air force said the fighter jets were taking part in the one-day firing drill with the

U.S. military in Pocheon, a city close to the heavily armed border with North Korea. The air force also said a committee would investigate the accident and examine the scale of the damage inflicted.

An unidentified air force official told local reporters that a pilot of one of the KF-16s had entered wrong coordinates for a bombing site. An unidentified Defense Ministry official told reporters that further investigation was needed to determine why the second KF-16 also dropped bombs on a civilian area. In a televised briefing, Pocheon Mayor Paek Young Hyeun called the bomb-

ings "awful" and urged the military to halt drills in the city until it formulates reliable steps that can prevent a recurrence. He said that Pocheon, a city of 140,000 people, provides three major firing ranges for the South Korean and U.S. militaries. Park Seong-sook, a 70-year-old eyewitness who was not hurt in the bombing, said she thought "a war has broken out." "It was such a loud sound," she said, adding that it left her trembling with fear. The military said later Thursday it has decided to suspend all live-fire drills across South Korea. The accident came just before the South Korean

and U.S. militaries announced they will begin large-scale annual military drills next Monday.

It's unclear how long the suspension of the live-fire

training would last, but observers said it would likely be until the military determines the cause of Thursday's accident and maps out preventative steps. □



Rescue members work at a bomb accident site where a South Korean fighter jet accidentally dropped bombs on a civilian area during training, in Pocheon, South Korea, Thursday, March 6, 2025.

**Associated Press**



# Romania detains 6 on suspicion of plotting a coup in collusion with Russia

By **STEPHEN McGRATH and VADIM GHIRDA**  
Associated Press

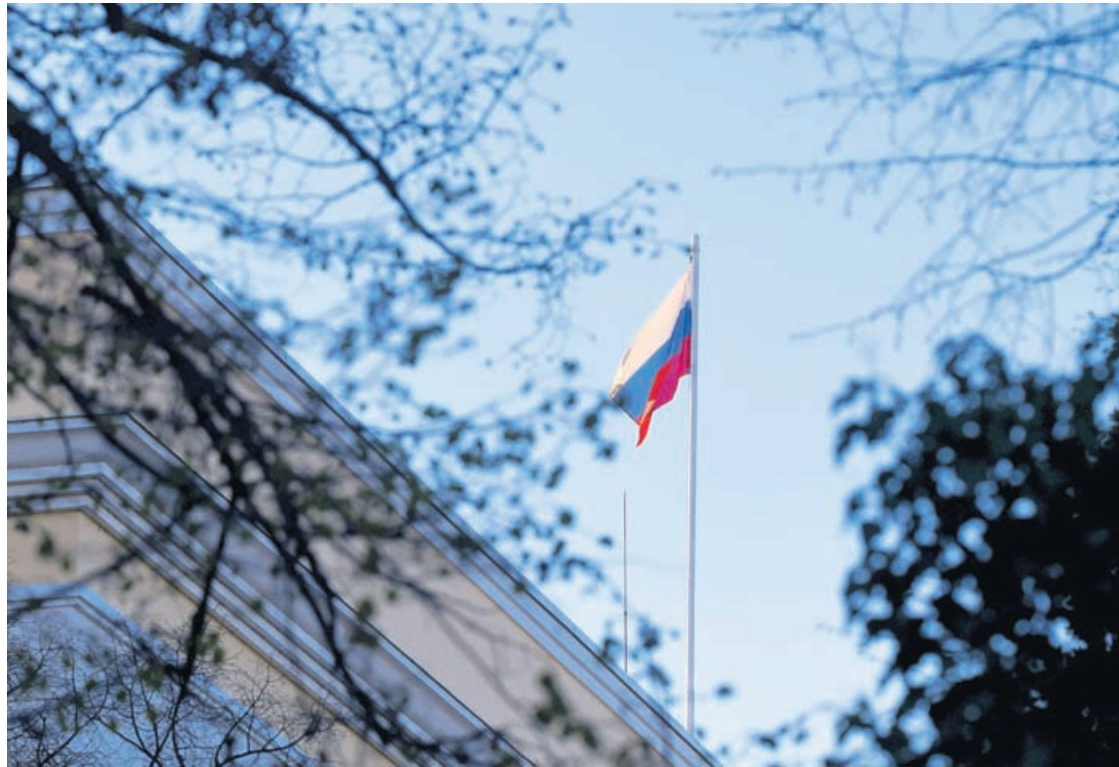
**BUCHAREST, Romania (AP)**

— Six people suspected of colluding with Russia to plot a coup against the Romanian government have been detained, according to police in the European Union and NATO-member country.

Romania's anti-organized crime agency, DIICOT, detained all six on Wednesday for forming a criminal group, which was initially set up in 2023 and had links to Russia.

Police said the group was formed to allegedly undermine the "sovereignty and independence" of the Romanian state by "politically undermining the country's defense capacity."

Investigations supported by Romanian intelligence services revealed that the group allegedly sought "the removal of the current constitutional order, the dissolution of political parties," and the installation of a new government formed by its members, police said. "In order to achieve their destabilizing objectives, representatives of the group actively requested support from officers within the Embassy of the Russian Federation," said Romania's domestic intelligence



**A Russian flag flies over the Russian Embassy in Bucharest, Romania, Wednesday, April 6, 2022.**  
Associated Press

agency, the SRI. The group had "a military-type structure" that aimed to negotiate withdrawal from NATO, which Romania joined in 2004, as well as the adoption of a new Constitution, country name, flag and anthem, police said. "The members of the criminal group would have repeatedly contacted agents of a foreign power, located both on the territory of Romania and the Russian Federation," police said.

Two of the suspects alleg-

edly traveled to Moscow in January this year, where police allege they had contact with individuals who supported the organization's "efforts to take over state power in Romania," police added.

Police raids and diplomatic expulsions raise tensions with Moscow

On Wednesday, authorities raided eight homes in the municipality of Bucharest and the counties of Ilfov, Giurgiu, and Maramures, which police said yielded "several pieces of evi-

dence" that were seized.

The raids came the same day Romania expelled two military diplomats from the Russian embassy in Bucharest as tensions soar between Moscow and Bucharest.

Romania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the decision related to Russia's military, air and naval attaché, Victor Makovskiy, and his deputy, Evgeni Ignatiev, over alleged "activities that contravene the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of

1961." The ministry did not provide further details.

"The two Russian diplomats carried out intelligence-gathering actions in areas of strategic interest and took actions to support the group's anti-constitutional actions," the SRI added in its statement Thursday. There was no immediate comment from Russia. On Wednesday, the Russian embassy described the expulsions as "unfounded and unfriendly" and said the embassy "reserves the right to take retaliatory measures."

Russian state news agency TASS on Tuesday reported claims from Russia's SVR foreign intelligence agency that the EU was seeking to interfere in Romania's upcoming presidential election. The SVR said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had asked Bucharest to bar Romanian presidential candidate Calin Georgescu, who emerged as the frontrunner in last year's canceled election, from participating in the rerun in May.

Georgescu has praised Russian President Vladimir Putin in the past as "a man who loves his country" and called Ukraine "an invented state," but he claims not to be pro-Russian. □

# 5 convicted of plotting to overthrow the German government and kidnap the health minister



**A prisoner transporter van is parked in front of the Higher Regional Court building after the court convicted five people of plotting to overthrow the government in a far-right coup and kidnap the former health minister, in Koblenz, Germany. Thursday, March 6, 2025.**

Associated Press

**BERLIN (AP)** — A German court on Thursday convicted five people of plotting to overthrow the government in a far-right coup and kidnap the former health minister.

The Koblenz Higher Regional Court sentenced the four ringleaders to prison sentences between five years and nine months to eight years. A fifth defendant received a sentence of two years and 10 months, German news agency dpa reported.

The defendants, four men aged 46 to 58 and a 77-year-old woman, were accused of founding or being a member of a terrorist organization called "United Patriots" and of preparing a highly treasonous enterprise against the German government. Federal prosecutors said during the trial that the group was linked to the so-called Reich Citizens scene that rejects the legiti-

macy of Germany's postwar constitution and has similarities to the Sovereign Citizens and QAnon movements in the United States.

Prosecutors said they intended to create "conditions similar to civil war" by using explosives to cause nationwide blackouts and then by kidnapping former Health Minister Karl Lauterbach, a prominent advocate of strict coronavirus measures during the pandemic.

There were no indications the group, which called itself United Patriots, was close to launching a coup. But prosecutors said the group's procurement of weapons and money showed they were "dangerous criminals who wanted to implement their plans." The case is separate from that of the more than two dozen people arrested in December 2022, also for planning to topple the government. □



## A guide for the perfect picture

# Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad

(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're taking a stroll in the city center, and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Oranjestad is full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad.

### "I LOVE ARUBA"

Right on Paardenbaai Plaza, near the harbor entrance, you will spot a giant sign that reads "I LOVE ARUBA". A great first stop for a quick shot with the family, this spot is among the few that has become a favorite among tourists, especially those that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation.



Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park, in front of Talk of the Town Hotel. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots along the way!

### The sitting bull

Yes, you read that right; right in the heart of the city center, in front of the Crystal Casino in the Renaissance

Mall, there is a black bull sitting on a bench, waiting for you to take a picture with it. Ok, so it's not a real bull, but "I took a picture with a sitting bull" sounds like a great conversation opener.



See if you can also spot the cow on the roof!

### Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo

While you're in front of the Renaissance Mall, check out the wooden swing on the other side of the mall on Plaza Daniel Leo. Another favorite among visitors wanting a cute snapshot for Instagram. Just pass through the Renaissance Mall and find this gem in front of the back entrance!

Since you've made it this far, one

question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

### Renaissance Dock

Last but certainly not least, the Renaissance Dock is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture, especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Renaissance Market Place, and runs from the Renaissance Marina up to Renaissance Beach and Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas! □

## Aruba's Nature is to be Cherished

**ST. CRUZ — The national park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There is numerous wildlife to discover like for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches. There are more places on the island that are a preserved area like the Bubali Plas which is a bird sanctuary.**

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species

of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches. A very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for



the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

### Bubali Magic

This beautiful close-up image of the pink bird is courtesy of Michiel Oversteegen of the Aruba Birdlife Conservation. This important foundation showcases and builds awareness of Aruba's birds and other native flora and fauna. You may have seen a 'pink cloud' lately at the Bubali or Spanish Lagoon Wetlands areas? It's most likely to be Roseate Spoonbills (*Ajaia ajaja*) or 'Chucharon Cora' as they are known in Papiamentu. This unusual looking bird forages in shallow muddy water while sweeping its flattened bill from side to side to catch small fish, crustaceans and other aquatic invertebrates. The Roseate Spoonbill remains an uncommon sight as they are vulnerable to degradation of feeding and nesting habitats (Wet-



lands). (Source: arikok national park)

The aforementioned is just a part of what Aruba's nature has to offer. We cannot stress enough to go, see for yourself. The island has the most beautiful beaches but it is also worthwhile to go beyond this and get an idea of our entire island. Lately there is a discussion going on about the effect certain activities have on our nature, for example the ATV vehicles cause a lot of

dust, noise and leave tire tracks. Animals live in these areas where the vehicles run, often with high speed and with detrimental consequences to flora and fauna. Motorized vehicles are forbidden to drive on the sand dunes in the Northern part of the island and all beaches in Aruba are forbidden for any motorized vehicle. Treasure our island to enjoy it like you do: as a tropical and natural paradise. We truly appreciate it! □



# Surf's Up: Favorite places to catch waves in Aruba

**ORANJESTAD** – Whether you are a salt-seasoned surfer looking for a thrill, or just looking to wet your toes in a little ocean adventure, Aruba has amazing places to learn and practice surfing! Although more known for the calmer waters of Palm Beach, Eagle Beach and Mangel Halto, Aruba also has some special places to thrill your senses.

Because of strong winds and breezes, Aruba is perfect for wind and kite surfing. You will surely notice kites in the air as you drive around the wilder, rougher areas on Aruba's east side.

There are plenty of surf shop rentals to help you with your gear, and there are also a lot of tutors if you're looking to try for the first time and need a little help. These can be found around the island, and will surely come in hand if you're wanting to try a new experience!

With that said, here are Aruba's favorite surf spots!

## Andicuri

Andicuri is recognized as the



best place for body boarding. Because of the rough waves, this beach is better suited for those with more experience in surfing. However, the beach with two bluffs – one on each side – is worth a visit, if only to watch the exciting show presented by the surfers.

To go to Andicuri, you will need a 4x4 vehicle and drive from the ex-Natural Bridge Center. Alternatively, you

can make it an adventure by going on a hike! The scenery is unique and beautiful on its own.

Reaching Andicuri Beach can be an adventure in itself, as it can be difficult to find and is only accessible by 4x4 vehicle or walking from the ex-Natural Bridge center, but the impressive scenery makes it all worthwhile!

## Arashi

Arashi, a beach located

close to the California Lighthouse, is a good spot for learning and having fun – if you're lucky! The waves at Arashi are usually calm, but with just the right weather, a swell forms attracting all the local surfers to the area.

## Boca Grandi

Boca Grandi is at the most southern spot in Aruba, and is a popular spot with experienced surfers. Close to the famous Red Anchor and our

beloved Sunrise City – San Nicolas, a trip to Boca Grandi can easily turn into an all-day trip to this area of the island. With a beautiful beach (although it is not allowed to swim here, because of strong currents), you can enjoy a relaxing time combing the beach for driftwood, coral, and little crabs and snails.

## Hadicurari

Known locally as Fisherman's Hut, here is where you will find most of the action for surfers in Aruba. With a variety of surf shops and schools in this area, you will find it easy to get in on the action. Hadicurari is also the site of the Aruba Hi Winds World Challenge, which takes place usually in June/July, and it is the largest wind-surfing competition in the Caribbean!

## Malmok

If you're a beginner, this is your spot. There are also various shops to rent gear and receive lessons, facilitating learning and just trying out a new experience. The beach is also popular for paddleboarding and other water-sport activities. ☐

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## Aruba: Best Caribbean Island to Buy Real Estate

### Overview

The Caribbean real estate market is witnessing an unprecedented boom, driven by its proximity to the US, Canada, and Europe, its laid-back lifestyle, and year-round sunshine. Whether you're considering a permanent relocation, seeking a holiday retreat, or eyeing a lucrative investment opportunity, there's an island in the Caribbean that perfectly suits your needs. However, choosing the best Caribbean island to buy real estate requires a deep dive and a thorough understanding of the markets.

Stability and growth are key when discussing Caribbean real estate. The region has consistently demonstrated resilience and upward property value trends, making it an attractive place for investment. Caribbean real estate offers not only a peaceful retreat but also the potential for significant appreciation and rental income.

It makes sense to consider investing in real estate with bond interest rates declining and the stock market at a historic high. Aruba real estate shows great promise when analyzed individually, due to its location outside the hurricane belt, its established infrastructure, and its international reputation as a high-end destination. We particularly favor prime locations, especially those with views of the Caribbean Sea.

### Aruba meets all the criteria for investing in Caribbean real estate

#### 1. Potential for Price Appreciation

Aruba's real estate is poised for significant growth, as its prices remain well below other comparable islands like the Bahamas, Barbados, Turks & Caicos, St. Martin, St. Kitts & Nevis, or Puerto Rico, and even South Florida. There is a moratorium on new condominium developments and hotels, as the government is prioritizing environmental protection over growth and closely monitoring the island's carrying capacity. Aruba is aiming for quality over quantity, focusing on higher-income tourists. However, demand for oceanfront condos continues to rise. The potential for price appreciation is clear, with supply being constrained and demand high.

#### 2. Flight Accessibility and Location

Aruba offers over 16 daily flights to and from the US and Canada, reaching 28 direct destinations, including Europe and Latin America. Plus, it offers the convenience of clearing US immigration before boarding return flights.

#### 3. Economic and Political Stability

As part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Aruba benefits from a sound legal system and adherence to the rule of law.

#### 4. Banking and Financing

Banking and financing processes for foreign investors are streamlined, with attractive mortgage loan rates available.



#### 5. Safety and Security

An island's security measures and overall safety record can significantly affect real estate values. Aruba ranks No. 1 in this regard.

#### 6. No Currency nor Capital Restrictions

The US dollar is widely used in Aruba, simplifying transactions for international investors. There's no need to worry about fluctuating exchange rates, as the Aruban Florin is pegged to the dollar, and there are no capital restrictions. You can forecast expenses and returns without the unpredictability of currency fluctuations.

#### 7. Established Caribbean Markets

Exploring established Caribbean real estate markets is a wise starting point when diving into Caribbean real estate investing. These markets offer a mix of stability and luxury that attracts a steady flow of investors and tourists alike.

Don't miss out. The time to invest in Aruban real estate is now! □



## Aruba to me

**ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.**

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for

promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Connie Robb from Ohio and Greg and Beth Horton from South Carolina, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to us is a fun night out with friends!"

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □



## The legend of the Kibrahacha tree

**(Oranjestad)—The Kibrahacha is a famous tree known locally for its bright, yellow flowers that blooms for just three days. Scientifically known as *Tabebuia billbergii*, and in English as the Yellow Poui, this tree is native to the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, and is considered among locals as one of the most spectacular trees on the island. But did you also know that the beautiful yellow flowers have a story behind them?**

The Kibrahacha is said to have extremely hard wood—so hard that it can break an axe. In fact, that's what its name means in Papiamentu: "kibra" (break) "hacha" (axe). The flowers bloom around April and May, but this only last for about three days, as the flowers start to fall off and the tree starts growing its green leaves. The Kibrahacha is especially particular, as it's the only one among its neighboring trees to starts blooming first.

The legend of the Kibrahacha

Written by Hubert (Lio Booi)

One day Aterima, who lived west of the hill Sero Warawara, woke up one day to find her father sleeping in his hammock, suffering a bout of terrible fever. Her mother was very worried, and as was the custom in the olden days, asked Aterima to go fetch Kudawechea, who was a epistemophile, to come see his father.

Aterima wasted to time and went to go fetch Kudawechea. Upon telling Kudawechea that her

father was sick, he immediately accompanied Aretima back to her hut, where he encountered her father in a bad state. Not willing to waste any time, he told Aretima that the only thing that can cure her father is a home-made potion made out of the Kibrahacha flower. At the time the Kibrahacha was not yet in her blooming season, but the stubborn Kudawechea was determined to bring back Aretima's father back to health, and so off they went to the nearest Kibrahacha tree.

When they arrived at the tree, they saw that it was covered head to toe in thorns, with only a few closed flowers at the very top. Kudawechea, experienced veteran in all things Aruban flora and fauna, told Aretima to start plucking the thorns of the tree to climb to the top where the flowers are. Aretima, just as determined to save her father, didn't hesitate to start.

To her surprise, every time she plucked a thorn of the tree, a bright, yellow flower bloomed in its place. The thorns were hard to pluck out, but Aretima continued plucking with enthusiasm and wonder at the unfolding sight before her. Not too long after she was able to fill her entire satchel with the yellow flowers. Kudawechea, satisfied to see Aretima so happy and encouraged to help her father, took her back to her hut.

Upon arriving back at the hut, Aretima's mother quickly made a tea out of the flowers and gave it to her sick husband. Miraculously, after just one



sip of the tea, the father's fever left his body immediately, and he opened eyes and sprung up feeling new.

The next morning, they all visited the same Kibrahacha tree that saved the life of Aretima's father and they saw another miracle. The tree was covered again in the same bright, yellow flowers, with not a thorn in sight. And as the legend goes, from that day on, the Kibrahacha tree no longer produced any more thorns. □

## Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill



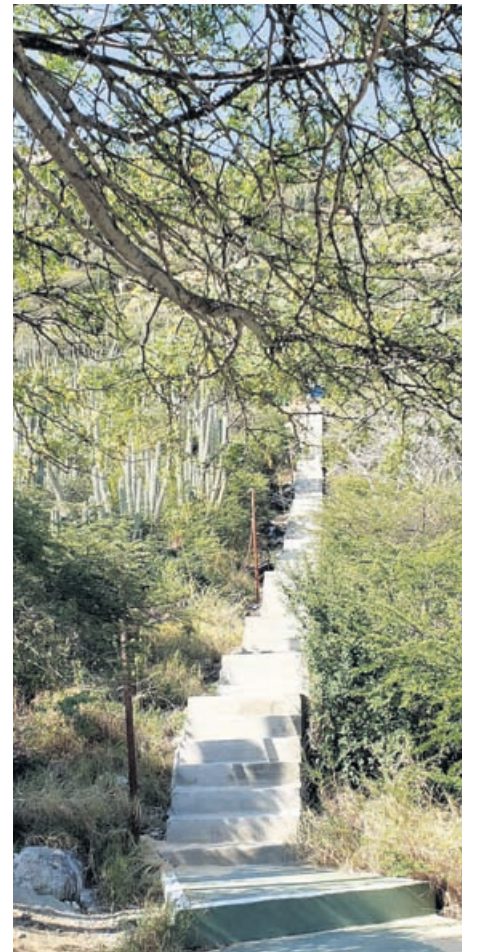
**(Oranjestad)—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon in Venezuela, providing one of the best views you can get on Aruba.**

located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level).



The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park.

The staircase that run on the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled—it may still be a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a



sight to see.

The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □



# Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost: Aruban fruits and vegetables

**Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mangoes hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.**

## Mispel

This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year-round.

## Kenepa



Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and prevents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically ripen during the summer.

## Druif



There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of

fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

## Shimarucu



Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimarucu. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarucus tend to taste better than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

## Tamarind



A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that develops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system. Start the day with a 'batida' (smoothie) enriched with a local veggie touch or select your restaurant that offers local vegetable dishes to get the real pure taste of it.

## Comcomber chiquito

This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Comcomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year-round.

## Yambo

Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di yambo. It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content. Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year-round.

## Bonch'i Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack. Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture—more so than snap beans—and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensifies. Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

## Pampuna



In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruban restaurants is Sopa Di Pampuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups. □



**CROSSWORD**

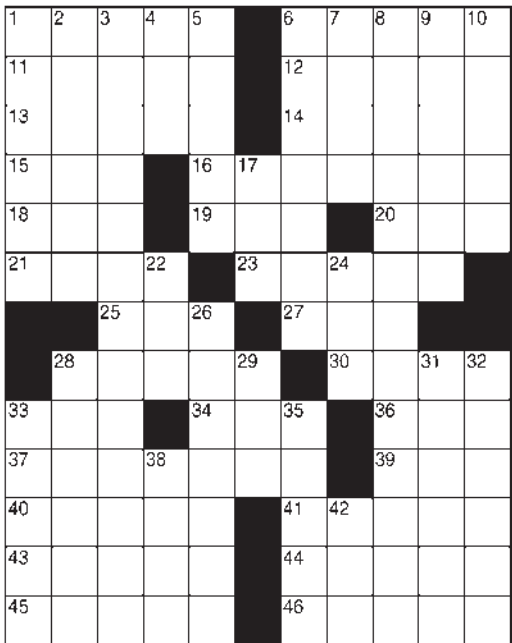
By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Handled  
6 Locker room need  
11 Strutting  
12 Bakery come-on  
13 Stallone role  
14 Woolly ones  
15 Lincoln nickname  
16 Heavy waves  
18 Yang's counter-part  
19 Long lunch  
20 TV's "Science Guy" Bill  
21 Robe feature  
23 Sculpted trunk  
25 Failure  
27 Word of accord  
28 Skeleton makeup  
30 "Beetle Bailey" dog  
33 Letter after sigma  
34 Pool need  
36 Coffee dispenser  
37 Consistent with one's reputation
- 39 German article  
40 Michael of Monty Python  
41 Book part  
43 Bumbling  
44 Put up  
45 Lawyer's workload  
46 Finishes last

**DOWN**

- 1 Uses an aerosol  
2 Mecca's place  
3 Tennis tourney division  
4 Rickety boat  
5 Smells  
6 16-ounce beer can  
7 Spoken  
8 Feminist field  
9 Beginning stage  
10 Director Hallström  
17 Ump's call  
22 Gaul invader  
24 Old auto  
26 Pours, as port  
28 Split item  
29 Day warmer  
31 Spell  
32 Starts  
33 Subject  
35 Old auto  
38 Ready to pick  
42 Old hand



3-8

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-8

**CRYPTOQUOTE**

YBCJ'F IZFG HJAFBFGJKG WKO

DAQJKG PDJFGBZK BF, TMWG

WAJ NZD OZBKQ CZA ZGMJAF?

— IWAGBK YDGMJA LBKQ SA.

**Cryptoquote:** LIFE IS NAUGHT BUT FROTH AND BUBBLES, TWO THINGS STAND LIKE STONE: KINDNESS IN ANOTHER'S TROUBLES; COURAGE IN OUR OWN. — ADAM LINDSAY GORDON



**Cruise ship Schedule: March 1 - 8 2025**

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
SAT	01	STAR PRIDE THE WORLD	06.00 09.00	18.00 ****	B C	1 1
SUN	02	AIDAPERLA THE WORLD - DEPT. CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00 **** 09.00	18.00 23.00 21.00	B C I	1 - 1
MON	03	CELEBRITY ECLIPSE EMERALD PRINCESS	08.00 09.00	**** 18.00	B C	1 1
TUE	04	CELEBRITY ECLIPSE - Dept. CARNIVAL HORIZON CELEBRITY REFLECTION FREEWINDS	**** 09.00 08.00 06.00	21.00 23.00 21.00 ****	B C I E	- 1 1 1
WED	05	MARELLA DISCOVERY AIDABELLA	08.00 10.00	20.00 22.00	B C	1 1
THU	06	CORAL PRINCESS	08.00	17.00	C	1
FRI	07	NORWEGIAN JEWEL	11.30	20.30	C	1
SAT	08	SEVEN SEAS GRANDEUR	10.00	23.00	C	1

**Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba**

**Supermarket hours**



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

**Electrical power**



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

**Drinking water**



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

**Safety**



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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## Casa Del Mar

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## Casa Del Mar

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## Marriott Surf Club

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## Investment opportunity

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Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.  
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668  
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.  
Acc. #23951903  
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

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Noord	527 3200
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Red Cross	582 2219

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS





# Private lunar lander touches down on the moon, but its status is unknown

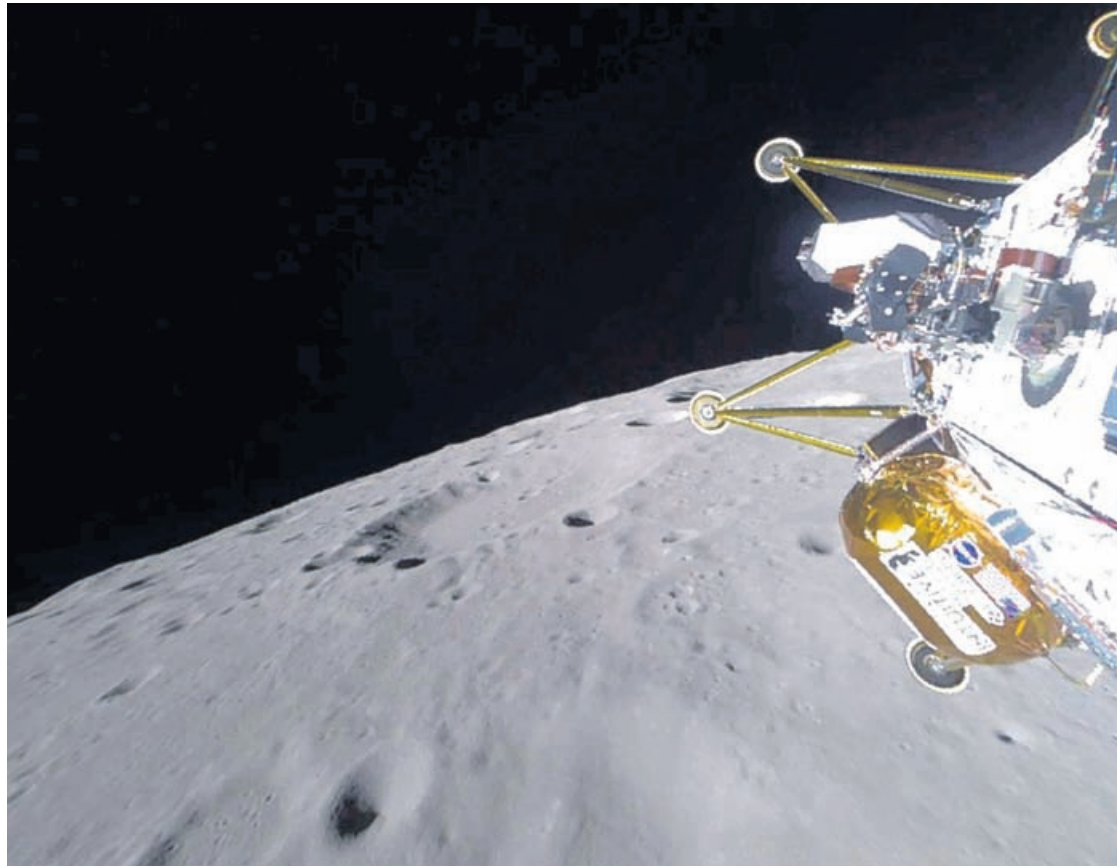
By **MARCIA DUNN**  
AP Aerospace Writer  
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

**(AP)** — A privately owned lunar lander touched down on the moon Thursday, but as the minutes dragged on, flight controllers could not confirm its condition or whether it was even upright near the south pole.

The last time Intuitive Machines landed a spacecraft on the moon, a year ago, it ended up sideways. The company's newest Athena lander dropped out of lunar orbit as planned, carrying an ice drill, a drone and two rovers for NASA and others. The hour-long descent appeared to go well, but it took a while for Mission Control to confirm touchdown.

"We're on the surface," reported mission director and co-founder Tim Crain. A few minutes later, he repeated, "It looks like we're down ... We are working to evaluate exactly what our orientation is on the surface."

Launched last week, Athena was communicating with controllers more than 230,000 miles (375,000 kilometers) away and generating solar power, officials said. But nearly a half-hour after touchdown, Crain



This photo provided by NASA shows the Intuitive Machines' Athena lander approaching the surface of the moon on Thursday, March 6, 2025.

Associated Press

and his team still were unable to confirm if everything was all right with the 15-foot (4.7-meter) lander. NASA and Intuitive Machines abruptly ended their live webcast, promising more updates at a news conference later in the afternoon.

"OK team, keep working the problem," Crain urged.

Intuitive Machines last year put the U.S. back on the moon despite its lander tipping on its side. Last weekend, it was joined by another Texas company's lander. Firefly Aerospace on Sunday became the first to achieve complete success with its Blue Ghost lunar lander, on the northeastern edge of the near side

of the moon. A vacuum already has collected lunar dirt for analysis and a dust shield has shaken off the abrasive particles that cling to everything.

Intuitive Machines was aiming this time for a mountain plateau just 100 miles (160 kilometers) from the south pole, much closer than before. This week's back-to-

back moon landings are part of NASA's commercial lunar delivery program meant to get the space agency's experiments to the gray, dusty surface and jumpstart business. The commercial landers are also seen as scouts for the astronauts who will follow later this decade under NASA's Artemis program, the successor to Apollo.

NASA officials said before the landing that they knew going in that some of the low-cost missions would fail. But with more private missions to the moon, that increased the number of experiments getting there. NASA spent tens of millions of dollars on the ice drill and two other instruments riding on Athena, and paid an additional \$62 million for the lift. Most of the experiments were from private companies, including the two rovers. The rocket-powered drone came from Intuitive Machines it's meant to hop into a permanently shadowed crater near the landing site in search of frozen water.

Intuitive Machines' Trent Martin said before the flight that Athena needed to land upright in order for the drone and rovers to deploy. □

# Ancient humans made tools from animal bones 1.5 million years ago

By **CHRISTINA LARSON**  
AP Science Writer  
WASHINGTON **(AP)** — Early humans were regularly us-

ing animal bones to make cutting tools 1.5 million years ago.

A newly discovered cache

of 27 carved and sharpened bones from elephants and hippos found in Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge site pushes back the date for ancient bone tool use by around 1 million years. Researchers know that early people made simple tools from stones as early as 3.3 million years ago.

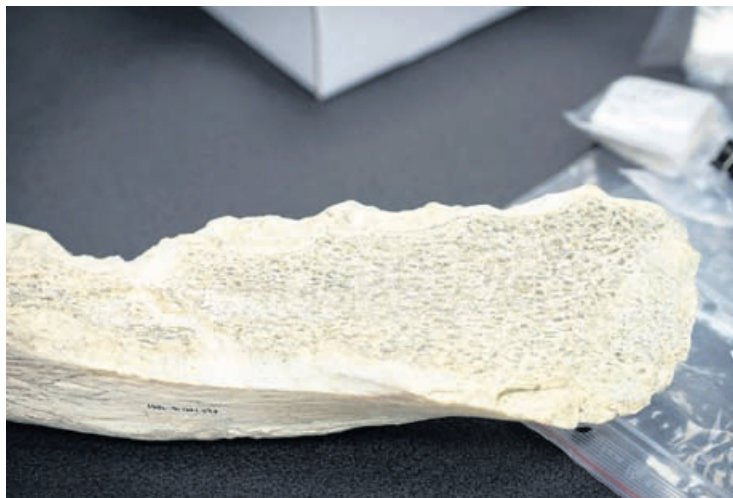
The new discovery, published Wednesday in Nature, reveals that ancient humans "had rather more complex tool kits than previously we thought," incorporating a variety of materials, said William Harcourt-Smith, a paleoanthropologist at the American Museum of Natural History, who was not involved in the research.

The well-preserved bone tools, measuring up to around 16 inches (40 centimeters), were likely made by breaking off the thick ends of leg bones and using a stone to knock off flakes from the remaining bone shaft. This technique was used to create one sharpened edge and one pointed tip, said study co-author Ignacio de la Torre, a researcher at the Spanish National Research Council. The bone tools were "probably used as a hand axe" — a handheld blade that's not mounted on a stick for butchering dead animals, he said.

Such a blade would be handy for removing meat from elephant and hippo

carcasses, but not used as a spear or projectile point. "We don't believe they were hunting these animals. They were probably scavenging," he said.

Some of the artifacts show signs of having been struck to remove flakes more than a dozen times, revealing persistent craftsmanship. The uniform selection of the bones — large and heavy leg bones from specific animals and the consistent pattern of alteration makes it clear that early humans deliberately chose and carved these bones, said Mirian Pacheco, a paleobiologist at the Federal University of Sao Carlos in Brazil, who was not involved in the study. □



This photo provided by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), shows a bone tool found in Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge, at the CSIC-Pleistocene Archaeology Lab in Madrid in 2023.

Associated Press



# Mavericks' Kidd blasts speculation that a heavy workload contributed to Irving's knee injury

By STEVE MEGARGEE

AP Sports Writer

**MILWAUKEE (AP)** — Dallas Mavericks coach Jason Kidd took issue Wednesday with media speculation that Kyrie Irving's heavy workload over the last month led to the nine-time All-Star's season-ending knee injury.

Irving tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee Monday in the first quarter of a 122-98 loss to the Sacramento Kings. Irving was fouled by DeMar DeRozan on a drive to the basket and his right foot landed on the foot of the Kings' Jonas Valanciunas.

"It's a freak accident," Kidd said before the Mavericks' 137-107 loss to the Milwaukee Bucks. "That's how it should be reported. But we're not reporting it right. We're reporting on conspiracy theories."

The 32-year-old Irving was averaging 36.1 minutes per game to rank 12th in the NBA heading into Wednesday's action. His workload had increased in the month since the Mavericks traded five-time all-NBA guard Luka Dončić to the Los Angeles Lakers.



Dallas Mavericks' Naji Marshall, left, and Max Christie (00) stand by Kyrie Irving (11), center, after Irving shot free throws after suffering an injury in the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Sacramento Kings in Dallas, Monday, March 3, 2025.

He had played at least 40 minutes in each of his first five games after the trade. Irving averaged 39.3 minutes per game in February. "He invited that," Kidd said. "He wanted that. But are we reporting that? Are we? No, we're not reporting that. We're reporting that we're running someone into the ground. That's

not true. That's his job, is to play. And he loves to play. "And it's all right to play 40 minutes at the age of 32, in a month's span. This isn't the whole season, right? I think sometimes we're taking things a little bit too far, or we're not really telling the truth because we want the likes or the hearts, or we want somebody to put us

up on this platform of not telling the whole truth. Because it was a freak accident. It happened early in the game. We should be promoting our athletes, our players to play more minutes and play more games, but are we? Probably not." Irving's injury ended a banner season in which he averaged 24.7 points, 4.8 re-

bounds and 4.6 assists while making just over 40% of his 3-point attempts.

"That was really a gut punch, not just for Dallas and the Mavericks, but for basketball fans around the globe," Mavericks teammate Klay Thompson said after Wednesday's game. "Kyrie's been our rock this year. It's like an unfillable void. We've got to rally around him and we've got to play hard for him."

"That one hurt, though." Irving's injury was the latest setback for the Mavericks, who already had lost 10-time All-Star Anthony Davis to a groin injury in his Dallas debut last month following the trade that sent Dončić to the Lakers.

Dallas is 10th in the West, putting the Mavericks on track for the final spot in the play-in tournament preceding the playoffs.

The Mavericks had only eight players available against the Bucks due to all their injuries. Dallas' starting lineup included Max Christie, Spencer Dinwiddie, Naji Marshall, Klay Thompson and Dwight Powell. Thompson led the Mavericks with 28 points. □

Associated Press

## Baseball Hall of Fame limits future appearances on veterans' committee ballot

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. (AP)

— The Hall of Fame made some small adjustments to its veterans committee system to limit people with relatively little support from repeatedly remaining on future ballots, a decision that could make it harder to gain entry to Cooperstown for steroids-tainted stars such as Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens. Any candidate on the eight-person ballot who receives fewer than five votes from the 16-member panel will not be eligible for that committee's ballot during the next three-year cycle, the hall said Wednesday. A candidate who is dropped, later reappears

on a ballot and again receives fewer than five votes would be barred from future ballot appearances.

Bonds, Clemens, Rafael Palmeiro and Albert Belle each received fewer than four votes in December 2022, when Fred McGriff was a unanimous pick. Bonds and Clemens were on a hall ballot for the first time since their 10th and final appearances on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot. The rules change could limit reappraisals of their candidacies.

In addition, the historical overview committee appointed by the BBWAA that selects the ballot can-

didates must also be approved by the hall's board of directors. The hall said the decisions were made by its board during a Feb. 26 meeting in Orlando, Florida.

In 2022, the hall restructured its veterans committees for the third time in 12 years, setting up panels to consider the contemporary era from 1980 on as well as the classic era. The contemporary baseball era holds separate ballots for players and another for managers, executives and umpires.

Each committee meets every three years: contemporary players from 1980 on will be considered this December, managers, ex-

ecutives and umpires from 1980 on in December 2026 and pre-1980 candidates in December 2027.

Dave Parker and Dick Al-

len were elected last December and manager Jim Leyland in December 2023. □



San Francisco Giants' Barry Bonds runs during the All-Star baseball game in San Francisco, Tuesday, July 10, 2007.

Associated Press





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## Women's tennis players now are eligible for paid maternity leave funded by Saudi Arabia's PIF

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**  
AP Tennis Writer

Pregnant players on the women's tennis tour now can receive 12 months of paid maternity leave, and those who become parents via partner pregnancy, surrogacy or adoption can get two months off with pay, under a program sponsored by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia and announced Thursday by the WTA.

"Independent contractors and self-employed individuals don't typically have these kinds of maternity benefits provided and available to them. They have to go out and sort of figure out those benefits for themselves," WTA CEO Portia Archer said. "This is really sort of novel and groundbreaking."

More than 300 players are eligible for the fund, which is retroactive to Jan. 1. The WTA would not disclose



**Serena Williams, of the United States, talks with her daughter Olympia and husband Alexis Ohanian after defeating Danka Kovinic, of Montenegro, during the first round of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Aug. 29, 2022, in New York.**

how much money is involved.

The program which the WTA touted as "the first time in women's sports history that comprehen-

sive maternity benefits are available to independent, self-employed athletes" also provides grants for fertility treatments, including egg freezing and IVF.

It's part of a wider trend: As women's sports rise, there is an emphasis on meeting maternity and parental needs.

How many mothers are on

the women's tennis tour now?

The WTA says 25 moms are active on tour; one, Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Belinda Bencic, won a title last month after returning from maternity leave in October. More and more pros in tennis have returned to action after having children, including past No. 1-ranked players and Grand Slam title winners such as Serena Williams, Naomi Osaka, Kim Clijsters, Caroline Wozniacki and Victoria Azarenka.

Azarenka a member of the WTA Players' Council, which Archer acknowledged played a key role in pushing for this fund thinks these benefits will encourage lower-ranked or lower-earning athletes to take as much time off as they feel they need after becoming a parent, rather than worrying about losing out on income while not entering tournaments. □

Associated Press